

ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 1833 02210 5727

REYNOLDS HISTORI
GENEALOGY COLLECTION

Gc
974.702
P832A

2294270

Fifty Years
on the
Frontier
with the
Dutch Congregation
at
Maghaghkamik



1737

1937

Commemorating the
two hundredth anniversary
of the
Reformed Dutch Church of Deerpark
Port Jervis, N. Y.

1737

1937

FIFTY YEARS ON THE FRONTIER

WITH THE

Dutch Congregation at Maghaghkamik

Written for the Bicentennial of the

REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH OF DEERPARK
PORT JERVIS, N. Y.

By

Pauline Knickerbocker Angell



Together with a Supplement to the History of the Church Written for the
Dedication of the Memorial Chapel in 1878

By

Rev. S. W. Mills, D.D.

THIRD PRINTING 1971

BY FRANKLIN PRINTING
NEW PALTZ, N. Y.

FOREWORD

The history of the Reformed Dutch Church of Deerpark, Port Jervis, N. Y., formerly called the Reformed Dutch Church of Magaghkemack, was thoroughly covered in the historical discourse read at the opening of the Memorial Chapel in 1878 by Rev. S. W. Mills, D.D., and subsequently printed in a pamphlet. To Dr. Mills' work there is nothing to add, except a brief supplement covering the development made by the church under its several ministers in the past fifty years.

It was decided, therefore, that on this two-hundredth anniversary of the founding of the church, the events which shaped the lives of the early congregation should be related, as a reminder of the hardships in the midst of which the Dutch settlers supported a church organization.

Maghaghkamik is the name given to this section by the Minsi or Wolf tribe of the Lenni Lenape who lived here. In the church records, it is spelled in a dozen different ways. In the Certificate of Incorporation, 1789, it is spelled Magaghkemack. In the Act to change the name (1838), it is spelled Magaghamach. The spelling here adopted is that used by linguists familiar with the Minsi dialect. Maghaghk means pumpkin. Kamik means field.



HOME OF JOHANNES WESTBROOK, SR.
Member of the Minisink Consistory, 1741-45. Church Master, 1746.

FIFTY YEARS ON THE FRONTIER
With the Dutch Congregation at Maghaghkamik.
 (PORT JERVIS, N. Y.)

By Pauline Knickerbocker Angell



WHEN Domine Fryenmoet came to the Minisink country in 1741 as the community's first settled minister, he faced a congregation of typical frontiersmen, bold and undisciplined, accustomed to dealing with nature in the raw and to settling their differences by direct action—the fist, the club, the axe, the sword, whatever was handy.

They were dressed in buckskin and homespun. The men wore their hair braided and tied up in clubs. Boys wore it loose on their shoulders. Old women of thirty tucked theirs under white caps. Girls wore long braids until they were married, which usually was between sixteen and eighteen.

Their Domine spoke to them in Dutch, for that was the only language most of them understood. Englishmen who came to these parts, if they did not speak Dutch, talked with the settlers in the Indian tongue, which, next to Dutch, was the language most generally used here.

As superstitious as the Indians among whom they had been living for forty years, the majority of them feared witches, had their witch doctors, believed in the efficacy of charms. If a man woke up in the morning with aching bones and muscles, it was because a hag had turned him into a horse and ridden him to the midnight rendezvous with the devil. If a cow or a calf were ailing, it must be measured from nose to tail by the good vrouw's apron, while she muttered an incantation provided by one of the "doctors" to exorcise the evil spirit. *

They were of the sort, however, to be won by the magic of a boy scarcely out of his teens who was able to read and write, which few of them could do, who was eloquent and versed in Latin and the scriptures beyond those who were many years his elders. A man of their own mettle would have been a challenge. This young Fryenmoet they would listen to with wonder and respect.†

When first they had faced the necessity of providing a resident preacher for their rapidly growing population, there were not enough preachers of the Reformed faith in America to supply the demand. Where could they hope to find a Domine willing to serve in this remote corner behind the mountains?

* Bennet, James, Address before Minisink Valley Historical Society, Port Jervis, N. Y. Feb. 22, 1912. See Evening Gazette, Feb. 23.

† For the popularity of boy preachers in frontier settlements at this period, see Dubbs, Joseph H., *The Reformed Church in Pennsylvania* (Lancaster, Pa., 1902) p. 108.

Then this boy came among them, like an answer to prayer. He was only sixteen, but already he had the beginning of a theological education which he had acquired in his native Switzerland. He was devout. He spoke their language. He was friendly. They liked him. Short of cash as they were—and money was always scarce on the frontier—they managed somehow to raise between them what was to them the enormous sum of \$314, so that he might be free to complete his education.

Accordingly, in 1737, Fryenmoet went to Kingston to study with Domine Mancius who had been administering the sacraments in the Minisinks once a year since 1733. He spent four years there. At the end of that period, church regulations required that he go to Holland to be examined and ordained. But that meant two long and dangerous voyages. Each would require from four to six months. There was danger from pirates. There was danger from cholera and smallpox, which frequently developed in the crowded sailing vessels. They could not afford to lose him. They had, as they told another church which tried to engage him, invested their livelihood in him.

In the end, they persuaded Domine Mancius to ordain him, without even waiting for permission from Amsterdam.* Whether they realized it or not—and we may be quite sure that the Cuddebacks and the Gumaers did realize it, for they were French Huguenots and recognized no ecclesiastical tie with the old country—they were taking a step which was to lead to complete independence of the church in Holland. It was an early symptom of that self-sufficiency which was to become complete with the surrender of Cornwallis forty years later.

Yorkers vs. Jerseymen.

Few ministers have faced a situation as full of dynamite as that which confronted Domine Fryenmoet. His congregation was literally at swords' points over the question of the boundary between New York and New Jersey—New Jersey claiming the land almost to Godeffroy (the ancient Peenpack), seven miles north of the present line; New York claiming as far down the Delaware as the lower end of Minisink Island, three miles below the Brick House and ten miles south of the present line. Throughout this seventeen miles, neighbor was set against neighbor and the Golden Rule was nothing but so many words. There were kidnappings, evictions, assaults and riots over a period of seventy-five years.

* Mills, Rev. S. W., *Historical Discourse*, (W. H. Nearpass, Port Jervis, N. Y., 1878) 2nd edition, insert.

At first, no doubt, it was easy for the young Domine to keep clear of the dispute. But when the churches were built in 1743, two of them within the disputed area, he must have had a ticklish problem on his hands.

In those churches, there was a special bench for the Justices of the Peace. These were the most important of the civil officials, and to emphasize the dignity of their office, their bench was surmounted by a roof or canopy set on two posts. But there were duplicate Justices—two in this neighborhood representing New York, namely William Cole and Peter Kuykendall; and two representing New Jersey, namely Solomon Davis and Abraham Van Auken.

What did Domine Fryenmoet do about it? Was the bench made long enough to accommodate all four? It would need to be an extra long bench. The Justices did not love each other. Squire Davis and Squire Van Auken already had been fined and imprisoned at Goshen for daring to function as Jersey officials. And even if Squire Cole and Squire Kuykendall were sufficiently imbued with Christian grace to share the bench, you can be sure that Capt. Jacobus Swartwout of the Orange County militia would never be content to sit through a service where he had to view a Jersey Justice sitting on equal terms with a Justice appointed by New York.

Neither can we imagine Squire Davis and Squire Van Auken accepting a lesser seat; Squire Van Auken particularly insisted on exercising his authority and was not a man to be intimidated. It would be interesting to know how Domine Fryenmoet handled the situation. Certainly it required a high type of diplomatic talent. In later years, he was often sought for his ability to deal with delicate situations. Perhaps his skill was acquired while he was ministering to his turbulent congregation in the Maghaghkamik Church.

By 1754, the feeling between the two factions had reached such a pitch that Governor Belcher of New Jersey wrote to His Majesty's Lords of Trade in London that unless New York could be made to consent to the establishment of a temporary line of jurisdiction, "I expect no less than an Actual War, by N: York upon this Province . . . and I expect much Bloodshed and Murders. . ." *

One of the incidents responsible for Governor Belcher's apprehension occurred at the Maghaghkamik Church, where Major Swartwout and Capt. Johannes Westbrook, Jr., had been kidnaped in January of that year.

* N. J. Archives, VIII., Pt. 2, p. 31.

Both the Major and the Captain held land south of the Jersey Claim Line and they held it under a New York title. In acquiring it, they had ousted the Westfalls, who had been settled on it under a Jersey title since 1698.* Swartwout lived on what is still the Swartwout farm at Huguenot, about a mile south of the Claim Line. Westbrook lived on what is now the J. Halsey Westbrook farm opposite the Cejwin Camps on Huguenot Road.

As officers in the New York militia, both men had attempted to enlist Jerseymen in their company, including all those in the present township of Montague, N. J. When loyal sons of Jersey refused to enlist under New York officers, Swartwout and Westbrook had imposed fines on them. When they refused to pay the fines, sergeants and corporals had been sent to seize their property in accordance with the military law†—and also in accordance with the wishes of those who maintained that the property belonged to New York anyway. To Major Swartwout and his Captain it did not matter that the men they attempted to enlist were already serving in the Jersey militia. They owed allegiance to New York, and Swartwout and Westbrook were going to see that they recognized and rendered that allegiance.

For this reason, both of them, from the Jersey point of view, were not only obnoxious but guilty of treason. To make matters worse, both men had been appointed Justices of the Peace. Thus to their military authority, they added the highest civil authority in the neighborhood. Perhaps, at last, they had shoved the Jersey Justices off their special bench in the church. At any rate, the mere fact that they had accepted office as New Yorkers made them guilty of treason on a second count, or so it seemed to the Jerseymen, who planned the kidnaping to make them answer for it.

The affair is thoroughly described in an affidavit made by Captain Westbrook at the time. If the beating of Major Swartwout seems brutal, it is no worse than the beating which Colonel Thomas Dekay, also of the Orange County militia, had given in the previous year to an old man who was a Quaker and a former dinner guest and whom Dekay caught riding across his fields in company with a Jersey surveyor.‡

The affidavit was copied from the manuscript records in Albany and printed by Deacon Nearpass in *Church Life*, January-February, 1898. It is as follows:

“Captain Johannes Westbrook, Esq’r., being of full age and Duly

* Cuddeback, W. L., *The Cuddeback Family*, (Tobias A. Wright, New York; 1919), pp. 33-35, map facing p. 48; *Journal of John Reading, 1719*, *Proceedings of the N. J. Historical Society*, April, July & October, 1915. *Deposition of Col. Jacob Rutsen, 1721*, N. Y. Colonial Mss., Vol. 63, p. 114.

† N. J. Archives, VIII., p. 210.

‡ N. J. Archives VIII., pp. 282-86.

sworn, sayeth that on the twenty-seventh day of January last, being on the Lord's Day, at the Church of Mahockamac, situate Ten Miles to the Northward of the Lower end of Little Minisink Island, between the hours of Twelve and One of the Clock, after Service was over and coming out of the said Church, was Stopped by one Thomas Schoonover, who, with a Constable's Staff in his hand, made him, the said Deponent, and Jacobus Swartwoot prisoners; and that he, the said Thomas Schoonover, and one John Flowing and several others whom this deponent knoweth not, struck the said Swartwoot several Blows upon the head, which Caused the blood to run down the Swartwoot's Cheeks, and that he, the said Swartwoot, commanding assistance several times, could gett none, But heard Peter Gomor and several others beg of them not to Kill the Man; and further, the said Deponent says, that the said Swartwoot, laying hold of his Sword as this Deponent believes with an Intent to draw it to defend himself, was prevented by a servant belonging to one Peter Decker, who Lay hold of the Sheath and forceably tore it from his side, and at length, being Overpowered and Surrounded by a number of men with clubs, who assisted the said Schoonover, they forceably took the said Jacobus Swartwoot, this Deponent, and put them both in a Wagon belonging to one Thomas Decker and carried them to Derick Westbrook's,* where the said Deponent was Obligated to enter into Security for Two Thousand pounds for his appearance at the next Court to be held in and for Sussex County, and further Deponent sayeth not."

Again one wonders how Domine Fryenmoet conducted himself in this crisis. Perhaps when the kidnaping occurred, he was officiating at one of his other churches, for he preached at Maghaghkamik only once a month. In the interim, the congregation held what were called reading meetings. The exercises consisted of a prayer by one of the members of the church and singing before and after the reading of a sermon from a book of sermons. Probably it was from one of these quiet meetings that the congregation walked out to find its leading members battling with the Jersey Constable and his assistants.

But warfare on the border was only one of the disturbing elements in the life of Domine Fryenmoet and his congregation. The threat of massacre by the Indians hung like a cloud over them from the very beginning of their church life. And the Indians they had most reason to fear were the Minisink Indians—the Indians among whom they were living, on the edge of whose villages they had built their log cabins, who hung around their door-steps asking for rum and gaudy trifles, with whose boys their own sons hunted and fished and wrestled.

* Derick Westbrook was the Captain's uncle. He lived at Namenock near the parsonage.

Alienation of the Indians.

The greed of the Pennsylvania proprietors was responsible for the alienation of these friendly Indians. In 1737, the very year in which the Minisink churches were organized, the scandalous Walking Purchase engineered by Thomas Penn and his brother John, deprived the Minisink Indians of their favorite hunting ground in the northeastern corner of Pennsylvania.

The Penns knew that the Indians did not want to part with the lands north of the Lehigh. For ten years, their surveyors had been turned back whenever they tried to operate there. But their land agents went ahead anyway and sold the land—to the Depues, the Brodheads, the Dingmans, the Van Ettens, to Jurian Westfall, Cornelius Van Auken and a host of others, so that by 1737, there were enough Dutchmen living on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware to support a church, and the Pennsylvania proprietors felt obliged to resort to trickery in order to extinguish the Indian title to the land.*

Penn's purchase was to extend back into the woods "as far as a man can go in a day and a half." From the point where the walk ended, a line was to be drawn to the Delaware, thus establishing the northern boundary. But instead of running this line east to the Delaware and striking it at the nearest point, which would have been in the vicinity of Easton, and which was what the Indians expected, the surveyors ran the line north and it met the Delaware at the mouth of the Lackawaxen.

This was a smart trick, but the settlers in the Minisink country paid for it in years of terror and bloodshed.

To the councils with the Indian chiefs which preceded the purchase, no Minisink sachem was invited. To have done so would have revealed too soon that the Penns' purpose was to take the land above the Lehigh River, to which all the Lenape had unanimously objected for years. Consequently, the Minisink Indians were the most deeply injured and they were the most relentless when finally they took up the hatchet.

Their resentment showed itself immediately, but their delay in resorting to direct reprisals does them credit. In 1740, a group of sachems met in Smithfield, where Nicholas Depue was living, and wrote a letter to the Magistrates of Pennsylvania complaining that about 100 families were settled on their land. "They tell that Thos. Penn has sold them the land, which we think must be very strange, that T. Penn should sell

* For this and other references to the Walking Purchase, see Buck, Wm. J., *History of the Indian Walk* (Printed for the Author, 1886); *Alienation of the Delaware and Shawanese Indians* (London, 1759; Reprinted by John Campbell, Phila., 1867).

them that which was never his, for we never sold him this land . . . and we desire Thos. Penn would take these people off from our land in Peace, that we may not be at the trouble to drive them off . . .”

From this letter, it appears that Nicholas Depue was the only settler in the Pennsylvania Minisink who had paid the Indians for his land. In fact, there was a law in Pennsylvania forbidding settlers to purchase from the Indians. The Penns reserved that right to themselves. In the letter the sachems acknowledged Depue's title to his land.

Receiving no reply to their first letter, the sachems wrote again in January, 1741. A white man, Jacob Sebring, acted as their scribe. His good character was vouched for in an accompanying note signed by Nicholas Depue, Jacob Kuykendall, brother of Peter Kuykendall, who had come to Maghaghkamik with the Westfall and Swartwout Companies in 1698; his son, Jacobus Kuykendall, and Abraham Van Campen, Judge of Morris County, N. J., and the first deacon in the Walpack church.

The answer to this letter was a curt rebuke to the Indians and a slap in the face for the white men who had taken their part. The scribe, in spite of his endorsement by the leading settlers at the Water Gap, was arrested. The Indians were ordered to keep the peace, but told that they might, at their own expense, come to Philadelphia and attend a council with the Iroquois chiefs when next they came down for that purpose.

Nutimus, Capoose and the other sachems, sent a courteous rejoinder, saying, “Our young men shall behave peaceably and orderly toward the English till the Five Nations come down to Philadelphia to treat, at which time we will have a fair hearing with them, and if the land be sold, we will be easy.”*

But the council, which took place a year and a half later, ended in a public insult to the Minsi Indians and their allies. The letters from Smithfield were read to delegates from the Six Nations and they were asked to remove these Indians who “have abused your good Brethren our worthy Proprietaries, and treated them with the utmost rudeness and ill manners,” and have “had the insolence to write letters to some of the Magistrates.”

Primed with one of the largest gifts ever received from Pennsylvania, the spokesman for the Six Nations rose and before an assemblage composed of two hundred Indians and as many white men as could crowd into the hall, gave the Indians from the Pennsylvania Minisink a scornful tongue-lashing and ordered them to evacuate those lands immediately.

* Mathews, Alfred, *Hist. Wayne, Pike and Monroe Counties, Pa.*, (R. T. Peck & Co., Philadelphia: 1886), pp. 28-31.

"We charge you to remove instantly," he said. "We don't give you the liberty to think about it. . . . Don't deliberate, but remove away . . ."*

So ended the "fair hearing" to which the Minisinks and their friends had been looking forward. It had the effect of driving hordes of them west to the Ohio River, where the French were waiting to receive them with open arms and a promise to restore their lands providing they would join them in an attack on the English.

The Covenant Chain.

In 1744, three years after Fryenmoet had begun his ministry, the war began. Every man in the congregation from 16 to 60 was enlisted in the militia. Training days were frequent. Means were devised for giving the alarm in case of an attack. Four shots in succession meant a raid. As soon as the signal was heard in one cabin, it was to be repeated for the benefit of cabins more remote.

But nothing disturbing happened here until the fall of 1745. Then, one morning, the settlers woke to find their Indian neighbors gone. It was more than the usual exodus which took place in the hunting season, for the children and the old men had gone, too. What did it mean?

Apprehension deepened when word came that Saratoga had been wiped out. On the heels of this disturbing news came a rumor that Woodstock in Ulster County had been attacked. Then came two friendly Minsis to Major Swartwout. They had fallen in, they said, with some braves who lived in the Ohio country. The Indians there were making a big houseful of snow-shoes and were going to raid Minisink, Esopus and Albany as soon as the deep snow came.

Swartwout communicated this information to the Governor of New York, who passed it on to the Governors of New Jersey and Pennsylvania.† Now it became very important to discover just how the Indians who had moved away felt toward their former neighbors. A delegation was appointed to follow them, discover if possible where and why they had gone, and beg them to return.

By this time, it was past the middle of December and already the snow was deep on the trails. Major Swartwout, Colonel DeKay and the other delegates, put on their snow-shoes and started northwest on the path that led toward the upper branches of the Delaware.

The Indians were found at Cohecton, where they had established themselves for the winter in the hunting cabins they had there. In reply

* Colonial Records of Penn., Minutes of the Provincial Council, IV., pp. 570-80.

† Colonial Records of Penn., V., pp. 1-2; Calendar of Council Minutes (N. Y.), Dec. 11, 1745.

to queries as to why they had moved from the white settlements, they replied that they were afraid, because the white men were always under arms.

To this, the delegates answered that they were so frequently in arms by order of the Governor, so that they might be ready to defend themselves against the French and their allies. The Indians, relieved to learn that there was no intention of attacking them, promised to send representatives to Goshen at the beginning of the New Year to renew their pledge of friendship with the white men.

On January 3rd, as they had promised, braves from the Wolf and Turkey tribes came striding into Goshen. The weather was bitter and they had made the long trek in the face of a stinging wind. In the court house, before a large assembly of white settlers, they went through the ceremony of the Covenant Chain with Colonel DeKay, who sat in a circle with them linking arms for upwards of an hour, while the air grew heavy with smoke from the pipe of peace and rank with the odor of bears' grease with which the braves were thickly smeared as a protection against the cold.

In conclusion, the tribes sent a belt of wampum to the Governor of New York and pledged their friendship. *

Now the settlers breathed more easily. The raid on the frontier did not materialize. Two years later, the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle put a brief stop to hostilities. The white men were free to resume their bitter fight for land among themselves. Domine Fryenmoet went about his tasks, worrying because the members of his congregation were slow in fulfilling their promise to clean his well, mend his fences, repair his chimney.

A schism in the church was brewing, which annoyed him, too. Although his own ordination in America had become a precedent on the basis of which an ever stronger demand was being heard for an American classis independent of Amsterdam, Domine Fryenmoet had little sympathy with this radical departure. In 1754, he broke with the Coetus, although he had been its president in 1752, and helped to form the conservative Conferentie party.

* Barclay, David, "Treaty of 1745," printed in the Goshen Independent-Republican, Dec. 16, 1905; Nearpass Collection, Minisink Valley Historical Society, Port Jervis, N. Y. For correct year, see The Calendar of Council Minutes, (N. Y.), Jan. 17, 1746.

The French & Indian War Begins.

To his frontier congregation, however, this ecclesiastical contest meant little. They had worse troubles nearer home. Pennsylvania surveyors continued to push through the woods along the Lackawaxen in spite of the opposition of the Wolf and Turkey tribes which had settled at Cochection.

"Spies from New England," as the Indians called them in their complaint to the Governor, were tramping up and down the Susquehanna, selecting sites for homes at Wyoming and Shamokin, the two valleys set aside for the Lenni Lenape in 1742. These unhappy tribes now saw the white men encroaching on the last remnant of land left them in Pennsylvania. The situation became increasingly tense.

In 1754, George Washington, whose family was a large shareholder in the Ohio Land Company, was sent by Virginia with a company of troops to see what the French were doing at the Forks of the Ohio (now Pittsburgh). He found that they had built a fort, which they called Fort Duquesne.

Acting on a hasty impulse, he clashed with a detachment of French and Indians, and the first shot was fired in a new war which was to make it possible to sell land to English settlers not only in the Ohio Valley, but in Canada as well.

But British prospects were not bright in the first years of the war. When the French defeated General Braddock at Fort Dequesne in 1755, they sealed the fate of the little settlements along the Delaware. The Lenape, seeing in this French victory a prospect that their lands would be restored, went on the war path.

New Jersey was prompt to fortify her frontiers. However keen New York may have been to establish her claim to the Minisink country east of the Delaware, she made no move to aid it in this crisis. The frontier along the Mohawk engaged her entire attention. Petitions for forts were made by Orange and Ulster Counties in January, 1756, and the Governor recommended that they be built "from a place called Machackamack to the town of Rochester in Ulster County."* Exactly two years went by before the first of them was erected.†

But in December, 1755, New Jersey built a line of forts along the Delaware. The upper fort, known as Cole's Jersey Fort, was located on

* Messages of the Governors of New York, I., p. 590.

† Calendar of Council Minutes (N. Y.), Jan. 12, 1758; Laws of the Colony of New York, IV., 276.

what are now the grounds of the East Main Street school in Port Jervis. It is shown there on a map made in 1758; also on another map made for the British in 1779.

William Cole, whose home was thus converted into a military post, was the first deacon in the Maghaghkamik church and had been active in its organization. He had given an acre of land for the church and burying ground, and the church stood only a few yards from his cabin.

Since it is highly improbable that a building of that kind would be left outside the stockade, where it was so close as to constitute a fire hazard, always to be feared in an Indian raid, and since also it would give shelter to an attacking party, it is practically certain that the stockade surrounded the church as well as Cole's house. Thus it would serve as a garrison for the twenty to thirty soldiers who, according to the legend on the map of 1758, were stationed there.*

Similar stockades were erected at Maschippikonk, in the vicinity of the present Montague Grange hall; at Namenock, four miles below; at Shappanack, below Bevans; at Walpack, and at Pahaquarry six miles above the Water Gap.† The fort at Namenock was within a stone's throw of Domine Fryenmoet's house. Part of it is still standing on Namenock Farm. That the forts were simply stockades or block-houses is also mentioned in the legend on the map.

Why the Domine Left.

The first massacres were confined to Pennsylvania. But on February 23, 1756, the Governor of New York reported that "On Tuesday last, about noon, a party consisting of 30 or 40 Indians attacked and burnt the house of Philip Swartwout . . . murdered five of the people, took a woman prisoner and destroyed the cattle."‡

Philip Swartwout was the son of Major Jacobus and his house stood near that of his father at what is now Huguenot. Throughout the war, New York kept soldiers quartered at the Major's house, which explains why it was not attacked at the same time.**

In his message reporting the attack on Swartwout, the Governor remarked that unless the Assembly voted more effectual means of defence, the inhabitants would be forced to abandon their settlements. As a matter of fact, many of the women and children of Peenpack were sent to stay with relatives or friends at New Paltz and Goshen.

* Mrs. Fred Terwilliger of 91 Ball Street, Port Jervis, has a photostat of this map. The original is in the State Library at Albany.

† N. J. Archives, XX., p. 218.

‡ Messages of the Governors of New York, I., p. 593.

** N. J. Archives, IX., p. 178 ff.

Three months later, on May 22, Anthony Swartwout, Philip's cousin, was attacked at his home in Walpack. His wife was shot dead on her way to the spring. Anthony and three of his children were herded into line and marched off toward the Delaware. The other children were killed before they left the house. Near Swartwout Pond, Anthony was tied to a tree, tortured and scalped before his children's eyes. A little further, the younger girl, unable to keep the pace, was dispatched. The other children, a girl of twelve and a boy of nine, were ferried across the river on a raft of rails a mile or two below the Walpack church, and taken to the Susquehanna.*

Later, it developed that a white man who had worked for Swartwout and who had a grudge against him, had set the Indians up to this massacre. Truly the white men needed the Gospel as much as the red men.

This atrocity so terrified the neighborhood that sixty families moved away, seeking refuge in Amwell, N. J. The Governor of New Jersey declared war on the Lenape and offered a bounty for scalps, thus nullifying the negotiations for peace which Sir William Johnson had just concluded. The number of soldiers stationed in the forts was increased and many people crowded into them to sleep.

In August, Abraham Van Auken was attacked. He lived where the Port Jervis Country Club is today. He was in his field loading hay, when an Indian fired at him from the cellar of an old house nearby, taking off a finger. Van Auken called to his daughter who was on the load to jump and run for her life. But in doing so, she lost her footing and fell. Instantly the Indian was upon her, his tomahawk raised. In spite of his wound, her father went for him with his pitch-fork. Her brother, Daniel, hearing the shot and the scream, grabbed his musket and fired. The Indian dropped the girl's hair and ran. As he reached the edge of the field, two other Indians were seen to join him.†

A few days later, Peter Westfall, Gerardus Swartwout, the Major's oldest son, and Samuel Finch were found murdered and stripped in the vicinity of Westbrookville. Swartwout and Finch were scalped.‡

Toward the end of the month, three men came staggering across the clearing toward Cole's Fort. According to the account which appeared in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on September 9, 1756, they "were almost naked, having only old Indian blankets about them to cover their nakedness. They made their escape from the Indians at a place called Jenango or

* N. J. Archives, XX., p. 65.

† The *Pennsylvania Gazette*, August 26, 1756, reprinted in N. J. Archives, XX., p. 59.

‡ Ibid.

Venango, an Indian Town, situated near the Head of Susquehanna, and were thirty-two days in the woods, during which time they suffered great hardships, for want of food, and were obliged to eat rattle-snakes, black-snakes, frogs, and such vermin; and sometimes they could find nothing to eat for days together.

"The first settlement they made, where they found any inhabitants, was the upper fort upon Delaware River in New Jersey, called Cole's Fort; and from thence they were sent under a guard to Elizabeth-Town, for fear the White people should annoy them, they looking more like Indians than Christians . . . " *

One of these men was Benjamin Springer. He said he had talked with Anthony Swartwout's children and claimed that they had given him a full account of the massacre. Later Swartwout's son made his escape and identified Springer as the white man who had persuaded the Indians to torture and scalp his father. Springer was tried and hung by New Jersey for this crime. †

Following the offer of a bounty for Indian scalps, men went after them in hunting parties. They tramped through the woods of Pennsylvania as far west as the Susquehanna, burning every Indian village they came to. This was inviting trouble, and wise men knew it. Before winter set in, Domine Fryenmoet took his wife and young children to a safer home at North Branch, N. J., bidding farewell to frontier life forever.

Peenpack Fortified.

From 1756 until 1760, there was no minister here. The newspapers of 1757 and 1758 contain many references to Indian depredations in the Minisinks, and it would not have presented a desirable field to the most ardent Domine.

Still, somehow, life went on. People got married, had babies, laughed and cracked jokes. This last seems most incredible of all.

One day, the women of William Cuddeback's family, who lived in the old stone house still standing at Godeffroy, got wind of an approaching raid. This was before New York had built forts in that neighborhood, so, taking the children, they made for the woods—always a much safer place than the house when Indians were coming.

* N. J. Archives, XX., p. 65.

† Stickney, Charles E., *The Old Mine Road*, No. 6, published in the *Wantage Recorder*, Sussex, N. J., during 1911. In *Nearpass Collection*, Minisink Valley Historical Society.

Jacob Cuddeback, the patriarch of the family, then over ninety years old and blind, refused to go with them. He said he would impede their flight. Perhaps the Indians wouldn't kill such an old man, anyway. Or if they did, it wouldn't shorten his life much.

The alarm turned out to be false, but when the women came back to the house again, they couldn't see the old man. They called. He answered—from under the bed. When they made fun of him for being a coward, he replied drily: "Even a worm will crawl for its life." *

But no one would be digging up facts about the Maghaghkamik congregation if all the rumors and alarms had proved as baseless as this one.

In January of 1758, two forts were built at Peenpack under the supervision of Col. Benjamin Tusten, Capt. Daniel Case and Capt. John Bull. Lieut. John Denton with a company of militia guarded the workmen while they threw up the log stockades and dug storage pits for powder.† One of these stockades was erected around the house of Jacob R. DeWitt, which stood on the left-hand side of the road where it crosses the Neversink on the way to Cuddebackville. It was made large enough to include the well which may still be seen in the center of the yard. The other stockade was built on two sides of the new stone house which Peter Gumaer had built on the knoll across the flats from the Cuddeback house.

The year that followed was the most harrowing in the history of this community. The loss of life which occurred during subsequent raids by the Mohawks and Tories under Brant did not approach the atrocities perpetrated in this year of 1758 on the inhabitants of Maghaghkamik and adjacent settlements.

Massacres Near the Parsonage.

The year opened with the slaughter of a family who lived close to the parsonage so prudently vacated by Fryenmoet and his family. On Monday, May 15th, according to an account printed in the *New American Magazine* of that month, "thirteen Indians rushed into the house of Nicholas Cole, in the county of Sussex, near Nominack Fort, in the township of Walpack in this province, adjacent to the river Delaware, and, Cole being from home, they immediately killed his son, about eighteen years old, who was asleep upon the bed; they then finished (another account says "bound") Cole's wife and, dragging her out of doors, she there saw her eldest daughter, aged thirteen, her son, aged eight, and her youngest daughter, about four years old, all murdered and scalped.

* Eager, Samuel W., *History of Orange County* (S. T. Callahan, Newburgh, 1846-7), pp. 382-3.

† *Laws of the Colony of New York*, IV., p. 276.

"The savage villains then plundered the house, after which they carried off the mother and her son Jacob, about ten years of age. They were soon after joined by two other Indians who had killed and scalped a third in Anthony Westbrook's field, near Minisink, in the said county of Sussex.

"The soldiers who were guarding the frontiers proposed to join some of the neighbors and to cross the Delaware the next morning by daybreak to watch the road to Wyoming. And as four of them were going to the place of rendezvous, about two o'clock in the night, they heard the Indians coming down the hill in the main road to cross the Delaware; when one of the four fired among them, the savages immediately fled, setting up a most dismal yell, and leaving Cole's wife and son at liberty, who made the best of their way along the road to one McCarty's, to which place the soldiers soon after came.

"The woman said the Indians talked English and Dutch, and she was sure one was a white man. Capt. Gardner is gone with two parties to waylay the road to Wyoming and Cohecton. The Indians, thinking they were discovered, killed the two Germans, and after scalping them, cut off one of their heads and fixed it on his breast, the two bodies being since found."*

On June 7, according to a report sent to the Lords of Trade by Governor Bernard of New Jersey, "advice being brought that a party of Indians had crossed the Delaware at Nomanack, a party of frontier soldiers and inhabitants went out against them and not finding them, five of the company separated from the rest and fell into an ambushade of seventeen Indians and both parties firing at once, two of our party were killed and another wounded. But the rest of the party being alarmed came to the place where they found one Indian killed and could perceive by blood and other signs that three others were wounded."**

The two soldiers who were killed in this skirmish were Cornelius and Abraham Westbrook,† sons of Johannes Westbrook who lived on what is now the Bell farm three miles below the Brick House. They were the cousins of Capt. Johannes Westbrook, Jr., of Maghaghkamik.

The others in the party with them were Gilbert Van Gorden, who was wounded in the arm, Jacob Helm and his son. They got away while the Indians were carrying off two of their wounded.‡

* Printed in James P. Snell's *History of Sussex and Warren Counties, N. J.* (Evert & Peck, Philadelphia, 1881), p. 37.

** N. J. Archives, IX., p. 116 ff.

† Report of Capt. Johnathan Hampton from Cole's Fort; in N. J. Archives, XX., p. 241.

‡ Report of Col. Van Campen. See N. J. Archives, XX., p. 220.

Murders at Maghaghkamik.

On June 12, the *New York Mercury* reported that "The beginning of last week, four people were killed by the enemy at Cole's Fort, on the frontiers of New Jersey, and by the great numbers of beds discovered in the woods thereabouts, 'tis imagined there are not less than a hundred Indians on the east side of the river."*

On June 13th, according to Governor Bernard's report to the Lords of Trade, "about thirty Indians attacked the house of Uryon Westfall and killed seven persons and carried off four children. It seems there were in the house fifteen men, most of them New York soldiers. But upon the Indians making the attack, they chose to fortify themselves in the cellar and chamber from where they drove the Indians off so as to save one scalp of the seven killed."

Jurian Westfall lived in the old Westfall homestead, just this side of the road which leads to the Swartwout farm at Huguenot. Among the children captured was his son Peter, four years old, who was playing by a pond under the hill on which the house stood. A copy of his father's will, which is in the collection of the Minisink Valley Historical Society, mentions this son, and leaves him a share of the property, "if he lives to come back from his captivity among the Indians."

About twenty-five years later, Peter did come back. He had heard of his inheritance and wished to claim it. He did not recognize his mother, although she recognized him. He had forgotten his mother-tongue and had to talk through two Indian interpreters who came with him. All he remembered was the little pond where he had been playing when captured. He had been well treated by the Indians, who had made him a chief. He refused to remain in the settlement, but having disposed of his property, returned to live among the Indians.†

On the same day that Westfall's was attacked, Sebastian Kortregt and Mary Kuykendall were shot dead as they travelled along the road. With them was a boy by the name of Titsoort. According to the account which appeared in the *New American Magazine* shortly afterward, the boy, "finding one of the Indians in pursuit of him . . . had presence of mind, as the last refuge to turn and fire upon him, and saw him drop. The other Indian still pursued, and the boy, perceiving that his gun so retarded his flight that he must be taken, broke it to pieces against a rock, that it might not fall into the enemy's hands, and made his escape from them."

* N. J. Archives, XX., p. 219.

† Notes by Dr. James Westfall, grandson of Capt. Abraham Westfall, Peter's cousin, printed by W. J. Coulter in the *Wantage Recorder*, Dec. 9, 1932; Eager, *History of Orange County*, p. 381; Gumaer, Peter E., *History of Deerpark (Minisink Valley Historical Society, Port Jervis, 1890)*, p. 67.

It should be remembered that the guns they used in those days were muzzle loaders, and reloading meant death when fighting at close quarters. Titsoort had the nerve to face the on-coming Indian and reserve his fire until the savage was so near that an effective shot was certain.

"He then alarmed the people, who immediately went out upon the scout with guns and dogs, and, coming to the place where the boy shot the Indian, they found a great deal of blood, but not the body.

"They searched very diligently about the woods, when at last one of the dogs began barking at a bunch of brush, and turning it aside, they found the Indian buried with his clothes and tomahawk, upon which they scalped him and brought away the things they found buried with him.

"On Tuesday, the 16th of June, Justice Decker, of the county of Sussex, brought the said Indian scalp and tomahawk to the city of Perth Amboy. This savage proves to be the notorious bloody villain well known by the name of Capt. Armstrong, a noted ring-leader of the Delawares, who, with other Indians, was concerned with Benjamin Springer (lately executed in Morris County) in the murder of Anthony Swartwout, his wife and children." *

The first name of the lad Titsoort has not been recorded. He was undoubtedly a great-grandson of William Titsoort, the first white man to settle in Maghaghkamik and the second in Orange County. He came here in 1690, and lived with his family among the Indians on what are now the outskirts of Port Jervis for eight years before any other white men joined him. His grandson, William, moved to what is now Sussex, N. J., about 1740. The name is now called Titsworth.

Skirmish at Cherry Island.

And so the massacre of the Swartwout family was avenged. A few days later, toll was taken of the Indians who had made the attack on Westfall's house. On June 24th, Capt. Johnathan Hampton wrote from Cole's Fort that "Sergeant Vantuyte, with nine soldiers, went in pursnit of the Indians that murdered the seven New York soldiers at Westfall's on the 13th instant. About four o'clock in the afternoon, they espied an Indian when they were about four miles in Pennsylvania, he standing towards a saw-mill on Delaware River about five miles above this fort."

This would be at the mouth of the Shinglekill above Sparrowbush, then claimed as part of New Jersey. The island where the Indians were discovered is now called Cherry Island and the skirmish described took place at Mill Rift. To continue with Capt. Hampton's report:

* Printed in Snell's History of Sussex and Warren Counties, pp. 37-8.

"The Sergeant then consulted his men and concluded the Indians must be by the river; upon which they went and soon saw ten Indians on an island on the Jersey side, making a raft.

"They then lay'd down their packs and hats, crawled up the river opposite the island, expecting them over. In this posture they lay all night.

"In the morning, three Indians lay'd on their guns and packs to cross, but contrary to all expectations, rowed the raft up the river 200 yards, our men creeping up as they went up. About sunrise, they espied an Indian on their side of the river, coming toward them, but he, seeing them, walked back leisurely to his gun, took it up, and gave the war whoop, when fourteen more rose up. On which a sharp engagement ensued.

"Some of our men fired on the raft, when one Indian tumbled into the river. They immediately tree'd on both sides, and five rounds at least was exchanged. We had one man shot through the leg, but killed three Indians on the land, besides one in the water. And as the engagement was by the river side, they dragged them into the river. The Indians on the island kept firing all the time on our right, but at too great a distance to fear anything." *

Lieut. Van Tuyl was awarded a silver medal for his gallantry on this occasion, by act of the provincial legislature of New Jersey, August 12, 1758. At the same time a medal was awarded to young Titsoort. These were the first medals for valor ever awarded by New Jersey. **

In spite of this evidence that the woods were full of Indians waiting to fall upon them, the settlers continued to plow their fields, tend their cattle, harvest their crops. They had to do it, or starve.

Most of the farmers who lived on the Pennsylvania side of the river, had taken refuge in the forts on the Jersey side. But they felt obliged to go over now and then to attend to their farm work. On July 6th, three men who had gone over to plow, were surprised and scalped by a party of Indians. † A scow full of men and women crossing the river to milk their cows became a target for enemy bullets. Most of the occupants were killed. ‡ Sally Decker, a girl of sixteen, standing guard with a musket while her brother did the milking on the so-called Indian Orchard Farm on the Milford road, was taken captive, but returned after five years. †† Thomas Quick, Sr., having returned to do some work on his farm on Vandemark Creek (Milford, Pa.), was surprised by a party of Indians

* The Pennsylvania Journal, July 6, 1758; printed in N. J. Archives, XX., p. 24.

** Snell, James P., Hist. Sussex & Warren Counties, N. J., p. 37.

† Report from Capt. Hampton of Cole's Fort; N. J. Archives, XX., p. 241.

‡ Mathews, Alfred, Hist. Wayne, Pike & Monroe Counties, p. 898.

†† Ibid., pp. 898-9.



CHERRY ISLAND IN THE DELAWARE ABOVE PORT JERVIS. SCENE OF A SKIRMISH IN THE FRENCH & INDIAN WAR—1753.

and scalped. His son, Thomas, Jr., and his son-in-law, who were with him, made their escape. It was then that young Tom vowed to take the life of any Indian who crossed his path thereafter.* On August 11th, according to the *New York Mercury* of August 28, 1758, "Jacobus Middah and his son were fired upon by the Indians in a field near Cole's Fort on the frontiers of New Jersey. The boy was killed on the spot, and Middah died a few minutes after he got into the fort."†

And thus the tribulations of the Maghaghkamik congregation and Fryenmoet's supporters on the entire length of the Minisink frontier became known through the colonies, and spread horror even in London.

Jersey Settles with the Lenape.

These calamities which came so thick and fast in the summer of 1758, were due to the fact that most of the soldiers assigned to the forts in both New York and New Jersey had been drawn off to reinforce General Abercrombie, who was being hard pressed by the French on Lake George. For this expedition, the little settlement of Peenpack, in spite of its own hardships, managed to furnish a wagon and a teamster.

Seeing the tragic consequences which had followed the reduction of forces in the Minisink country, Governor Bernard ordered the number of guards restored. In addition, he ordered a second path to be made along the Delaware half a mile inland. The two paths were patrolled three or four times a day. The blockhouses were supplied with dogs to scent the track of the Indians, "which is very strong by their using bear grease," and to prevent ambushes.‡

But in October, New Jersey took a step which was still more effective. She paid the Delaware Indians a thousand pounds to clear up all their claims against her. From that time, there were no more attacks by the Delawares in this quarter.

It might be supposed that the settlers here would have had their fill of fighting by this time. But no. As soon as the Indian troubles ceased, the border troubles began again.

On September 7, 1759, Philip Swartwout, who had moved into his father's house following the burning of his own, was forcibly ejected by his Jersey neighbors, Abraham Van Auken, Jacobus Van Auken, Abraham Westbrook, Matthew Terwilliger, Jurian Westfall, Simon Westfall, Jacob Westfall, and others. Swartwout, as he said in his complaint.

* Matthews, Alfred, *History of Wayne, Pike & Monroe Counties, Pa.*, pp. 854-56.

† N. J. Archives, XX., p. 241.

‡ N. J. Archives, IX., p. 116 ff.

“having fitted and prepared his land for seed before the ouster above mentioned, was reduced to the necessity, rather than lose all the fruit of his labor for the present year, of sheltering himself and his family in a small kitchen on the said lands, where he lives at the mercy of those who have ejected him . . . ”*

But those old warriors, Major Swartwout and Colonel DeKay, were dead now. There were no reprisals. The case stayed in the courts and was finally settled in 1769 when the New York-New Jersey line was fixed at its present position.

Another struggle which had been in abeyance during the Indian war now came to the front again. Connecticut Yankees began coming through here on the way to resume the settlement at Cohecton which they had started in the early part of 1755.

Cohecton in those days meant more than a little village in Sullivan County, New York. The name applied to the whole region from Ten-Mile River to the mouth of the Callicoon, and included both sides of the Delaware. The Connecticut Yankees were making their settlements chiefly on the Pennsylvania side and they were buying their land not from the proprietors of Pennsylvania, but from the provincial government of Connecticut. Before she got through with it, Pennsylvania had almost as much trouble with them as she had with the Lenni Lenape.†

Connecticut's claim rested on a Royal Charter nineteen years older than Penn's charter, by which Connecticut was to have all the unoccupied land from sea to sea between the parallels of 41 and 42 degrees. So she felt free to sell any land in Pennsylvania above Stroudsburg which the Penns had not already disposed of.

In 1754, the Connecticut land agents had been so active in the Minisinks that Daniel Brodhead, ever a friend of the Pennsylvania proprietors, reported to them that thirty Dutchmen in the Pennsylvania Minisink had bought land on the Susquehanna from Connecticut and were preparing to move to Wyoming.

Traces of these new-comers may be seen in the Minisink and Maghaghkamik church records of the 1740s and 50s. It seems that the Dutch girls liked them. It is recorded that they married these young men from “Nieuw Engelant,” and went off to make their homes with them on the new Cohecton frontier.

* N. J. Archives, IX., p. 178 ff.

† For an account of the Pennhamite War, which lasted from 1769 to 1806, see Matthews, Alfred, *History of Wayne, Pike & Monroe Counties, Pa.*, pp. 65-71; 98-103.

The Connecticut Yankees.

When Domine Romeyn came to minister to the congregation here in the fall of 1760, these Connecticut Yankees were a familiar sight. They came down the river in their canoes, bringing wheat to be ground in Maghaghkamik mills; the little trading posts which had languished since the removal of the Indians, began once more to do a thriving business.

In October, a month after Romeyn had accepted his call, Aaron Depue, a son of Nicholas, came up with three other Magistrates and a Sheriff to investigate the situation at Cohecton. In order to secure the information they wanted, they felt it necessary to disguise themselves as farmers seeking land. In their subsequent report, they said they had discovered that the invading Yankees claimed a tract along the Delaware which extended on the river thirty miles, horizontal measure, "beginning nearly opposite to one Peter Kuykendahl's in New Jersey."*

One wonders whether the Pennsylvania Council knew where Peter Kuykendall lived. His house was in what is now Port Jervis, near the present home of George L. Colby. It stood on the brow of the hill overlooking Fowler Street. Elizabeth Street was made by widening and straightening the old lane.

The following spring, the Governor of Pennsylvania sent Capt. James Hyndshaw of Bushkill to observe what was going on at Cohecton. Capt. Hyndshaw says in his report that he set out on the 16th of April, "and got, the next day, to a Tavern kept by Peter Kuykendale, on or near the river Delaware, at Mackhackamack, in Sussex County, West New Jersey."

From this we know that Peter Kuykendall was an innkeeper, as well as a New York Magistrate and an elder in the church.

At Kuykendall's tavern, Capt. Hyndshaw says he "saw and talked with one Halbert, who told this Deponent that he came from Connecticut, and was going with his family to live at the said new settlement at Cushietunck, under a Connecticut Right."

Then Capt. Hyndshaw had a conversation with Kuykendall himself, in which Kuykendall told him "that about two days before, some of the Indians who lived on Delaware at or near Cushietunck (of whom the Connecticut people had made their pretended purchase of those lands), had been at his house and acquainted him that they, the said Indians, had sent two of their Chief Men to Teedyuscung (Chief of the Delawares), and the Indians of Wyomink, with two belts of wampum, one white and

* Colonial Records of Penn., VIII., p. 564.

the other black, in order to know their determination with respect to the Connecticut people's new intended settlements at Cushietunk and Wyomink, and that the design of the Indians sending the black belt . . . was to denounce or signify to Teedyuscung and the other Indians at Wyomink and Susquehanna, that if they should give an unfavorable answer and intend to give any opposition to the Connecticut people settling at Cushietunk or Wyomink, then they, the said Indians who sent the said belts, were resolved to join with the Connecticut people, and settle them there by force"

From this it appears that the Wolf and Turkey tribes who had settled at Cohecton in 1745, were defying the ban placed on them by the Iroquois and were selling land to the white men.

Madolene's Warning.

Having received this important item of information, Capt. Hyndshaw proceeded on his way, and the next day arrived at Cohecton, where he met an Indian called Madolene.

Madolene was the Indian who, according to tradition, had scalped Thomas Quick, Sr., in the fields near Milford. Later, having got drunk in a tavern on what is now the J. H. Westbrook farm, he displayed the old man's shoe-buckles and mimicked his death agony. Young Tom, who happened to be present, marched Madolene out of the tavern at the point of his musket and shot him in the road not far from the Van Fleet's farm on Huguenot Road. Until recent years, there were bars across a wagon road there which were always called "Madolene's bars." *

Capt. Hyndshaw found Madolene near a mill which was being erected by Moses Thomas, head man of the settlement. They were also building a block-house. Madolene, it seems, had been at the Treaty at Easton in 1758, and Hyndshaw had seen him there and recognized him at once.

The Indian spoke pretty good English and asked Hyndshaw "in a very earnest manner, what his business was there, and told him that the Indians at Susquehanna were much dissatisfied with the Connecticut people's settling at Cushietunk, and were resolved, if the Governor of Pennsylvania would not send them away, that they, the said Indians, would drive them away by force"† Teedyuscung had returned the black belt. It was a warning to the white settlers to leave.

A year and a half later, on an October morning in 1763, two little boys, grimey, scratched with brambles, so weary they could hardly trot

* The Misses Van Vleet had this information from their father.

† Colonial Records of Penn., VIII., pp.612-14.

the last few steps, came into the stockade at Maghakhkamik. Neither of them was eleven years old. They had travelled through the woods all day and all night forty miles down from Cohecton.

One of them, Elias Thomas, gasped out the news that his father had been scalped by the Indians; that the block-house was besieged; that only one man was there to defend it. He begged that help be sent.

A party was quickly gathered. They embarked in canoes, paddled swiftly up the river. They found the block-house undamaged, the women and children safe. Witters, the one man left to defend them and whose first name seems never to have been recorded, had fooled the Indians by issuing orders now in one tone of voice and now in another, giving the impression that the place was well garrisoned. Foiled in an attempt to set fire to the block-house by the quick eye and unerring aim of Witters, they had withdrawn in the night to their headquarters on the Susquehanna.*

Frontier Realism.

The men from Maghaghkamik buried Moses Thomas and the other settler who had been scalped, and began to load the women and children into the canoes. Then it was found that there was not room enough for all of them. One must be left behind. The lot fell to an idiot girl. When her mother realized what was happening, she tried to force her way out of the canoe, but she was held fast. They paddled swiftly down the stream, to be back in Maghaghkamik before night fell, the mother moaning bitterly with her apron over her head.†

Hard-hearted? Yes. But frontier life demanded hard hearts in its women as well as its men. There was no place now for the finer sensibilities which can only be accommodated in times of peace.

The congregation which Domine Romeyn faced was not the congregation to which Domine Fryenmoet had preached. Many of the individuals were the same, but the spirit was different. They were heavy drinkers, now. At the afternoon frolics when men got together to clear a field of stones or to raise a barn, rum flowed freely. At the dancing frolics rum was served, too, and under its influence the young men, as the evening went on, indulged in many a fist-fight. Petty thieving became common. Peter Gumaer says these bad habits were learned from the soldiers who had been quartered in the forts. However that may be, the settlers did not repent of their transgressions. In the twelve years that Domine Romeyn served the church, but twenty-three new members were added, as against 110 received during the fifteen years of Fryenmoet's ministry.

* This occurred eight months after France and England had signed the Peace of Paris.

† Quinlan, James E., *History of Sullivan Co.* (Beebe & Morgans, Liberty, N. Y., 1873), pp. 107-8.

Nevertheless, two encouraging steps were taken during Romeyn's pastorate. One was the beginning of services in the Clove; the other was the opening of a school at Peenpack. Since before Fryenmoet came, there had been a school at the Minisink village, presided over by William Ennis, the one-armed school-master. But there was none nearer.

The schools were under the jurisdiction of the church. In 1767, the consistory rebuked the schoolmaster, Thomas Kyte, for his harsh treatment of the pupils, and agreed to retain him only if he would repent and ask forgiveness. The Peenpack school had been opened at least two years before that, for on the edge of an old document owned by the Minisink Valley Historical Society is scrawled this memorandum: "In the year 1765 on the 15th of April is Levi Decker beginning to go to school at Peenpack."

Levi Decker lived on what is now the Van Inwegen farm on the outskirts of Port Jervis. The school was located just this side of the Cuddeback stone house in Godeffroy. Consequently the lad had to travel ten miles daily to and from school. As he was only seven years old, he was probably taken on horseback.

Domine Romeyn had come here after having been forced to resign his Long Island charge because of his opposition to an independent American classis. When, in 1771, the controversy was settled in favor of the American party, the more independent members of the Maghaghkamik church also became dissatisfied with Domine Romeyn and he resigned in 1772.

From his resignation until the calling of Domine Van Bunschooten, thirteen years later, there was again no resident minister here. And during this interval, also, war broke over the community.

On the Eve of Revolution.

What prompted these farmers back here behind the mountains to rebel against their king? It is hard to tell. It was not because they were Dutch. Many Dutchmen remained loyal to British rule. They doubtless heard, in time, that the cities were actively resisting taxation without representation. Governor Colden, whom New Yorkers burned in effigy in his own golden coach because he was enforcing the Stamp Act, lived midway between Newburgh and Montgomery; they heard the details of that, surely, when they made the journey to market.

But they themselves did not feel the pinch of British taxation as did the commercial classes in Philadelphia, New York and Boston. Johannes

Decker, who had paid eight shillings a pound for tea in 1766, was paying only five and sixpence in 1776.* Perhaps their ardor, such as it was, was the result of contagion. Those same independent spirits who had welcomed the establishment of an American classis were, no doubt, among the first in this community to respond when the drums began to beat for political independence.

Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, a French soldier who had settled in Orange County at the close of the French and Indian War, has left a description of this settlement as it was in the days just preceding the Revolution. He is writing of the catastrophies which befell the people living on the frontier during that conflict.

“Some time ago the beautiful settlement of (Maghaghkamik) upwards of a hundred years old, was utterly destroyed. It presented to the eyes a collection of all that the industry of the inhabitants and the fertility of soil could exhibit (which was) most pleasing, most enchanting. Their lands were terminated by the shores of a beautiful river; their houses were all elegantly built; their barns were the most spacious of any in that part of the country; the least wealthy inhabitants raised at least a thousand bushels of wheat a year. Their possessions were terminated by the steep ascent of a great chain of mountains, beyond which no improvements ever can extend. From their bosoms enemies came and laid everything waste. Many sober industrious people were killed, and all they had was destroyed.†

These enemies who, as de Crevecoeur says, sprang from the bosom of the community, were those farmers who remained loyal to the king.

No-Man's Land.

In 1775, when the pledge was circulated to stand together behind the newly-created Continental Congress against the British Parliament and its oppressive taxation until a reconciliation could be effected, all the settlers here signed it. But when, in 1776, the extreme patriots issued a declaration of independence, there were some who hesitated, turned the question over in their minds and decided that matters had gone too far.

The men who reached that decision in this community—Loyalists they called themselves—were the largest property holders in the neighborhood. That they should remain on the side of law and order and support the *status quo* rather than the revolution, was natural. Most large property owners throughout the colonies did likewise.

* Accounts of Johannes Decker, Minisink Valley Historical Society, Port Jervis, N. Y.

† de Crevecoeur, Hector St. John, “Sketches of Eighteenth Century America” (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1925), pp. 181-83.

Throughout the war, Maghaghkamik, so recently taken from New Jersey and annexed to Orange County in New York, was a veritable no-man's land. At Peenpack, it was different. Its long association with Ulster County had given it some standing. It was asked to send a member to the county committee of safety, chose Philip Swartwout, and presently had a committee of its own under his chairmanship.

But to Orange County, the little community on the Delaware over the mountains was nothing but an annoyance—an annoyance which was, however, a bulwark against invasion. For without this little fringe of farmers at the Western base of the Shawangunk mountains, the Mohawks would have been free to sweep through the passes into the Hudson River country. But Maghaghkamik was not taken into the county's family councils. It went its own way, did the best it could, gathered important information as to the enemy's plans and communicated it to state headquarters through the committee at Peenpack.

For the first three years of the war, there was no fighting here. Prices soared, people were put on short rations. Abraham Van Auken made a few shillings ferrying prisoners across the Neversink en route to the jails at Kingston and Newton. * Wagon trains from Philadelphia rumbled past, carrying supplies for the army at Ticonderoga. In the winter of '76, a ragged remnant of General Arnold's defeated "rabble in arms," marched through to join Washington in Pennsylvania.

Everything looked black for the patriots. New York City was occupied by the British. Cornwallis had just crossed into New Jersey with an army of 6,000. Men from here were called to guard the passes in the Highlands, to garrison the forts along the Hudson. The women took over the care of the cattle and knit steadily far into the night to make up the quota of socks and mittens exacted of every family. Concerning the war, they were silent. Here on the frontier which was exposed to the ravages of both parties and where sentiment and interest were hopelessly divided, even within the same family, it was not wise to talk. There was danger within as well as without and no one could tell how events would shape themselves.

The papers left by Philip Swartwout contain reports of neighbor against neighbor which makes the whole business seem from this distance like petty tale-bearing. And yet it was desperately important to know who were friends and who were enemies. And so the man who was overheard to say that he'd as soon make war on his own mother as on the king of England, was haled before the committee of safety and forced to take a special oath of allegiance. Henceforth, too, a close watch was kept on his movements. And he was only one of dozens.

* Receipted bill for his services in collection of Minisink Valley Historical Society.

With the immediate prospect of a British victory, hundreds subscribed to a declaration of fidelity to the king—2,703 in New Jersey, 1,282 in the rural districts and city of New York. Then, in a ten-days' campaign beginning with the crossing of the Delaware on Christmas Eve, Washington recaptured New Jersey and took up winter quarters at Morristown. It was the turn of the Revolutionists to take heart.

All through the winter, England made a desperate effort to increase her army. Hundreds of her imported Hessians had fallen at Trenton, along with their commander. An epidemic had further reduced their ranks. The German principalities had little more to offer. Hope lay in recruiting the Loyalists.

British Recruiters in Minisink.

As soon as spring began to come, in 1777, friends and relatives of the Maghaghkamik congregation were discovered going quietly from one man to another, sounding him out, and, if he seemed a good prospect, offering him a hundred acres of land to join the British in New Jersey, threatening to shoot him if he did not.

But they made a mistake in one man, John Moore by name, who had taken refuge at Major Decker's. He revealed the whole plot to the Peenpack Committee, and it was a plot of considerable dimensions.

Under the leadership of a well-known Loyalist of Newton, N. J., British sympathizers were plotting to gather 3,000 men to meet at the Court House there, "and the design is, that the men-of-war was to sail up the North (Hudson) River, upon which they expected that the militia would be called out to guard along the North River and that they were to divide themselves into two parties, the one to come along this way, and the other some other way, and they expected a party from the Northward across the Lakes to be joined by the Indians and so all at once fall upon the country and cut off and destroy what they can." *

Thomas Kyte, who was the express rider for the Peenpack Committee, took this message posthaste to the Convention of the Representatives of the newly made State of New York, which was sitting at Kingston. They immediately passed it on to Brigadier-General George Clinton, New York's commander-in-chief.

A week later, Major Decker received an express from the fort at Shappanack reporting that "we are in imminent danger of both life and

* Public Papers of George Clinton, I., pp. 693-94.

liberty . . . and therefore desire the favour of you . . . to collect a large body of the militia and march them forthwith to Sussex Courthouse with all possible speed. We have here now ready to march a party of Col. Stroud's battalion and more tomorrow, who will meet you at said Courthouse. Pray, Sir, delay no time as the case is dangerous . . . ”*

Major Decker's troops were under orders to proceed to the Hudson—just as the plotters had foreseen. But he took the liberty of sending them to Newton instead—a step which met with the subsequent approval of Gen. Clinton, who had, in the meantime, received news of the plot as revealed by Moore.

And so the scheme to parallel a British advance up the Hudson by a drive through the back country, fell through. Gen. Clinton issued orders for the arrest of the British recruiters named by Moore and eventually some of them were apprehended.

The Convention sent word to the Peenpack Committee authorizing them to communicate directly with Gen. Clinton whenever they got wind of danger. Two days later, therefore, Swartwout sent him a letter which contained some more disturbing news:

British Line of Communication Discovered.

“Upon the doleful call of our friends at Koschecton for help against the growing Tory brood, we thought it advisable to order Captain Cuddeback to march with fifteen of his men and Captain Newkerk with the like number to their assistance, which they did last Sabbath Day morning, but we have had no account as yet from them.

“Sir, by the best intelligence we can receive we must conclude that there is a constant communication kept up between the two British armies by the way of Koschecton and the head of the Drowned Land, for we are persuaded that there are harbourers enough for them along that way.

“Sir, there is another difficulty attends this precinct, for the continental stores are continually conveyed this way from Philadelphia to Ticonderoga and a great part of the road without inhabitants, so that we judge it not safe that they should go without a guard. But we refer it entirely to your better judgment and so wait your orders and act pursuant thereunto.”†

The danger was coming nearer. Forts were built. At Peenpack, the homes of Peter Gumaer and Jacob R. DeWitt, the latter now captain of a company of rangers, and a member of the committee of safety, were

* Public Papers of George Clinton, p. 700.

† Ibid., p. 705.

again surrounded with stockades. The home of Benjamin Depue, another member of the committee, was also fortified.

At Maghaghkamik, there were two official forts. The home of Major Decker on the east side of the Neversink at the place where Cornelius Cuddeback now lives, was stockaded and made the storehouse for military supplies. The home of Captain Martinus Decker in what is now West End, was stockaded also.

In all of these forts, soldiers were stationed, the number varying with the expectation of danger. In addition to the soldiers, all the neighbors crowded in with their children, slaves and essential household goods. Over one hundred souls, in addition to the soldiers, spent the winter in Fort Gumaer.* The outside dimensions of the Gumaer house were 45x40 feet. It was divided into four rooms, with a loft above and a cellar below, the latter also divided into four compartments. The walls in the loft and in the rooms below were lined with beds. Gumaer attributed the physical deterioration of the next generation to the foul air which was unavoidable in these close quarters.**

The soldiers slept in the cellar. In winter, they had an iron pot filled with coals from the upstairs fireplace which they kept burning by throwing in a handful of chips from time to time. One of the rooms upstairs had neither stove nor fireplace, and also depended on one of these pot-fires for heat. In the loft, pot-fires were placed on either side of the chimneys.

The winter of 1778-79 was particularly bitter. Thomas White, who lived in the fort, kept a diary in which he noted that not a drop of melting snow dripped from the eaves over a period of forty days.†

In the other forts, the conditions were, if possible, worse than in Fort Gumaer.

Besides the official forts at Maghaghkamik, the newly erected brick house of Abraham Van Auken—the first brick house in this vicinity—was prepared to resist an invasion. It is possible that some of the other settlers threw up stockades at their own expense. In explaining to his British commander why he had taken so few scalps in the raid on Maghaghkamik, Captain Joseph Brant said: "The reason we could not take more of them was owing to the many forts about the place, into which they were always ready to run like ground hogs."‡

* Gumaer, Peter E., *History of Deerpark*, pp. 87-88.

** *Ibid.*, pp. 113, 173, 198.

† *Ibid.*, p. 198. Thomas White, the schoolmaster, had recently come from England and naturally was a "King's man." He took no active part in the hostilities, but when the fort was threatened, told Capt. Cuddeback that he could be called upon if necessary. In his will, he left a sum of money to the Magaghkemack Church, to the Congregational Church at Middletown and the Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches at Goshen, on condition that a sermon on one of four specified subjects be preached in each of them on a designated Sunday "in every year forever."

‡ "The Campaign and Battle of Minisink," *Olde Ulster*, November, 1906, II., p. 337.

The summer of 1777 was spent in momentary dread of the British advance up the Hudson. At last, in October, it came. Gerardus Van Inwegen lost his life in the attempt to hold Fort Montgomery. Gerardus and Cornelius Swartwout were among the few defenders who escaped. Capt. Abraham Cuddeback, assigned to guard the east end of the chain which had been laid across the Hudson in the hope of impeding the British fleet, was deserted by the rest of the company but stuck grimly to his post until daylight revealed what had happened across the river and men on board the British vessels, spying him, invited him on board with promise of immunity. He scorned their offers, however, and eventually made his way home to Peenpack with the discouraging news of the defeat.*

Almost at the same time came news of the burning of Kingston. The news of Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga was more cheerful, but it is doubtful if many here realized its strategic importance.

The Raid on Peenpack.

In the spring of 1778, confident that the scales had tipped in favor of British victory, several Loyalists from this neighborhood went off and enlisted under Brant. Bitterness and apprehension rose to a new height. On the 19th of April, the Peenpack Committee sent affidavits to General (now also Governor) Clinton, indicating that a plot was under way to wipe out Wyoming (it occurred less than three months later); that having destroyed Wyoming, the Indians planned to come through to the Hudson with 4,000 men; that in about five weeks, the Indians and Tories were coming to take all the "Damned Rebels at Cohecton."†

In July, refugees from Wyoming came straggling into Maghaghkamik. Capt. Cuddeback, now employed as a scout by the Peenpack committee of safety, returned from Cohecton with a report that about 250 Indians and Tories had collected there after the Wyoming massacre and had marched for Peenpack and Minisink. Their plan was to go as secretly as possible to the Mongaup and there divide into small parties "and to allot certain parts of the settlements to each respective party, then separate, and each party execute their villany at the same time."

But when they had come as far as the mouth of the Lackawaxen, their advance runners informed them that a large number of militia had collected at Minisink and so the raid was postponed.‡

* Gumaer, *History of Deerpark*, pp. 123-4.

† *Public Papers of George Clinton*, III., pp. 192-94.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 539-44.

A month later, Capt. Bezeleel Tyler, setting out from Major Decker's fort with thirty-seven men, intending to deal with some of his Loyalist neighbors in Cohecton, discovered another party of 135 Indians and Tories on their way to raid Minisink. Fortunately, again, they were intercepted by Capt. Stroud's Company of the Pennsylvania Line, and a party of Jersey and Pennsylvania militia, who happened to be on their way up the Delaware. They had a skirmish, took three of the enemy, and killed some.*

Late in September, Thomas Kyte rode up to Colonel John Cantine at Marbletown, with information brought from Aquaga where Brant had his headquarters, that Brant was about to "make a push some where in this quarter."†

And so, after all these warnings, when the war whoop was heard in Peenpack on October 12th, everyone was ready for it. Everyone, that is, except Philip Swartwout and his sons. Regardless of danger, there was always the food question. It was the season for a frost. Crops must be saved. And so on this morning, he had gone with his four stalwart boys down across the flats to the farm, a mile below the fort. There the Indians surprised them. Squire Swartwout was scalped. His death was a serious loss to his neighbors and to his country. Two of his sons were killed in their attempt to defend him. He ordered the other two to run and save themselves. They did. One of them headed for the Neversink, swam across, was shot on the opposite bank, but escaped. The other raced across the flats toward the fort, an Indian brave at his heels. What saved him was the fact that he could vault the rail fences, while the Indian had to climb them. Lieut. William Stewart who had acted as sentry, was killed.‡

These were the only casualties. Some homes were burned, but they were empty. Capt. Cuddeback, in command at Fort Gumaer, added to its appearance of strength by giving the women pitch-forks and clubs and marching them out around the fort among the militia while the attacking party was still too far away to detect the fraud. They marched past the fort out of gunshot and went on to Fort Depuy, which had been abandoned and which they burned. They went on up the valley to Fort De-

* Public Papers of George Clinton, pp. 633-34, 653.

† Ibid., IV., pp. 113-16.

‡ Gumaer, Peter E., "Church History," written in 1844, Mss. in collection of Minisink Valley Historical Society. Mr. Gumaer was seven years old when the raid on Peenpack occurred and was living in Fort Gumaer. See also, Recollections of John Van Etten, as taken down by Dr. Solomon Van Etten and T. Lybolt in 1889, in collection M. V. H. S. Mr. Van Etten was the nephew of Jacobus Swartwout, who outran the Indian. See also Pension Papers of William Oldfield, printed by W. J. Coulter in Wantage Recorder, July 30, 1937.

Witt, and taking up a position on the hill, fired into it for about an hour, but only succeeded in killing a horse.*

It was when he reported the raid on Peenpack to General Washington, that Governor Clinton first suggested the expedition against the Indians which was successfully carried out in the following year under General James Clinton and General John Sullivan.**

In the meantime, General Washington took measures to protect the Minisink frontier from further attacks. On November 16, he wrote to General Hand from his headquarters at Fredericksburg: "Count Pulaski's legion, consisting of about two hundred and fifty horse and foot, is at Cole's Fort, in the Minisink settlement. I intend to strengthen it with the addition of some other corps, say about two hundred and fifty more. Colonel Cortlandt's regiment is between Minisink and Rochester."†

Pulaski's legion was not at Cole's Fort, however. This place was far too small to garrison such a force. Instead, Pulaski went down the Delaware to Shappanack where Col. John Rosenkranz had a fort.‡ More important still, the commodious inn built by Isaac Van Campen was close at hand. At various times in both wars it had sheltered over 150 refugees. It is still standing, on the Delaware, below Bevens, N. J.

So there Pulaski stayed for two months. He grumbled from the first about his obscure frontier post, and no doubt welcomed the order from Congress to leave the Minsink and proceed to South Carolina.†*

Early in May, the second regiment of the New York line under Colonel Philip Van Cortlandt which had wintered in Rochester (now Accord) in Ulster County, marched down on its way to cut a road through Pennsylvania to Wyoming for the passage of Gen. Sullivan's army. They spent the night of May 6th at Mamakating (now Wurtsboro). Lieut. Hardenbergh's entry in his Journal on May 7th reads as follows:

"At 4, struck tents, marched at 5, halted at Bashesland (now Westbrookville) for refreshment for about two hours, proceeded on our march. Crossed Neversink Creek at Dewitt's and arrived at Major Decker's, crossed the creek with wagons (through the ford on the J. H. Westbrook farm), and encamped in the field near Decker's house."‡†

* Gumaer, "Church History."

** Public Papers of George Clinton, pp. 633-34, 653.

† Writings of George Washington, VI., pp. 111-12.

‡ Ibid., pp. 123-24.

†* Ibid., p. 173.

‡† Journal of Lieut. John L. Hardenbergh: Sullivan's Indian Expedition, prepared by Frederick Cook, Secretary of State (Auburn, N. Y., 1887), p. 117.

The arrival of this regiment on its way to wipe out the Indians of central New York put courage and hope into the hearts of the settlers on the Minisink frontier. The soldiers, brave in their uniforms of buff and blue, seemed to offer a more certain protection than the militia clad in nondescript homespun.

The regiment marched on next day to Namenock, where their provisions were loaded into canoes and their four wagons were sent back. From Namenock they went on to Van Campen's inn, thence to the ferry at Walpack which was run by Daniel Decker, brother of the Major. Crossing the ferry, they marched down past Depue's at Shawnee, Penn., and arrived at Fort Penn in Stroudsburg at dusk on the 11th. This was their objective. From here they went into the woods, to cut the road for Sullivan's army quartered at Easton.

Raid on Maghaghkamik.

A feeling of security such as they had not known for several years took possession of the beleaguered frontiersmen. A school at Maghaghkamik had been built on the east side of the Neversink near where the present school house stands. It was opened for a summer session.

One morning in July, Major Decker discussed with his wife the advisability of attending a funeral at Van Auken's to which all the neighbors had been invited, according to the custom on such occasions. She thought it would be quite safe for him to go. She did not mind being left alone for an hour or two. His aged mother agreed with her. They had a big wash to do and could not spare the time, but it would be well for him to honor the Van Aukens with his presence. So off he went.

The older children were in school. Mrs. Decker and her mother-in-law went about their household tasks. At noon, the old lady rounded up the younger children and started to prepare dinner. Mrs. Decker continued to pound the clothes down by the brook.

Suddenly she heard something, looked up. A hundred Indians and more were advancing across the meadow toward her from the direction of the ford. She sprang up and started to run across the fields to give the alarm. A young brave caught her, and took her to Brant.

This scourge of the frontiers was on the war-path again, in spite of the fact that his stronghold was threatened by the combined armies of Sullivan and Clinton.

His guides or pilots, as they were called, were white men, Dutchmen, who had lived here at Maghaghkamik and joined the Indian branch of the British army in 1778. These men, who were named by one of their number captured shortly after the battle of Minisink but whom it is not necessary to name here, since the feeling against Loyalists even now after more than a century and a half, is still bitter enough to start a fight,

represented some of the wealthiest families in this section. They were doing their duty as they saw it in defence of the established government.

The order issued by Brant before the raid, as reported by the captive mentioned above, to spare all women and children and shoot only men who started to run or who raised a weapon against them, was no doubt the condition on which these white men had agreed to participate in the attack on their former neighbors. What they were after was not scalps, but cattle to feed the starving populace in the towns menaced by the Sullivan-Clinton expedition.

And so Mrs. Decker was not scalped. Brant told her she must come along with them; he wanted her to see her husband's house burned. As they approached the gate of the stockade, which she had left open, an Indian came out with her baby Jane on his arm. Brant ordered him to give the baby up, which he did. The mother handed her to a slave who took her out into the orchard.

Mrs. Decker was led to the kitchen. There, in spite of the fact that he was painted and dressed like an Indian, she recognized a man who lived across the river. He had laid a pile of kindling in the center of the floor and was applying a light. At that moment, the Major's mother, Jenneke Van Iuwegen, grabbing a pail of water, threw it over the smouldering tinder. The Loyalist said, "I am going to build it up again, and if you put it out, I will kill you." Mrs. Decker asked if she might save anything. Brant told her she might keep one thing. She chose the bedding. Brant ordered a brave to help her take it out of the house and over the fence into the pasture lot. Then the house and the stockade went up in flames.*

Meantime, the attacking party had separated into groups and proceeded down the valley. Jacobus Swartwout, who had made his escape on the flats at Peenpack less than a year before, was working in Anthony Van Etten's blacksmith shop on the next farm below Major Decker's. There was no time to run when he saw them coming. He climbed up into the big flue, where he braced himself with arms and legs. The Indians entered the shop, saw only the slave who had been helping Swartwout. Negroes were never attacked by the Indians. They looked curiously about the shop. One of them seized the bellows and began blowing up the flames. The slave, knowing what this would do to Swartwout, told the Indian to let the bellows alone, saying he would break it, and then something terrible would happen. So pretty soon, they went on.†

* Recollections of Solomon J. Westbrook, son of Maj. Decker's daughter, Jane, as related to Dr. Solomon Van Etten in 1889; Collection of Minisink Valley Historical Society.

Also, "Major Decker's Ride," Port Jervis Evening Gazette, April 20, 1878.

† Gumaer, "Church History."

School Children Saved.

Brant, meantime, had ridden ahead. When he got to the school-house, he found the children in the yard enjoying a noon recess. Jeremiah Van Auken, the schoolmaster, must have seen him and picked up his musket to defend his charges. At any rate, he was shot dead on the spot. Then Brant, opening his paint bag, smeared a black cross on the aprons of the little girls and told them to hold them up when the other Indians came. It was a sign that their lives were to be spared. He then scalped Van Auken before their horrified eyes and went on his way.

This story seems like a figment of the imagination. But one of the girls in later life told it under oath when she was helping Blandina Van Etten establish her husband's claim to a pension.* Mr. Lewis Van Inwegen, whose great-grandmother was there, has seen the paint-smeared apron which his mother used to keep in a little trunk in the attic. Peter Gumaer, who was a boy of eight living in the fort at Peenpack when the raid occurred, told it to Samuel Eager, who repeated it in his History of Orange County.**

Some of the girls, before the paint had dried, impressed the sign on the shirts of their little brothers. Other boys ran up the road to Levi Van Etten's house (where Annadale is now). There the women had been taking a noonday rest on a bench in the kitchen. Beneath their voluminous skirts, they hid the frightened youngsters and they were not discovered.†

Benjamin Decker, the Major's son, aged eleven, started on a dead run up the road with a couple of Indians at his heels. When he reached the turn where the grist-mill stood, he scrambled up the bank, making for the woods. In doing so, he dropped his slate and his spelling book, and the pursuing Indians, curious as children, stopped to pick them up. Thus he made his escape and at nightfall reached the home of Daniel Green on the other side of the mountain at Smith's Corners, where he gave the alarm.‡

Jacobus Van Vliet, who lived on what is now the Dilliston farm below the Van Etten's, was attending the funeral. The women, catching sight of the approaching Indians, ran for the woods and no move was made to stop them. But Ralph Cuddeback did not get off so easily. He had stopped in at Van Vliet's, on his way home, perhaps, from the Sterl-

* Coulter, W. J., Wantage Recorder, December 2, 1932.

** p. 389.

† Recollections of John Van Etten, a nephew of one of the boys.

‡ Recollections of Solomon J. Westbrook, nephew of Benjamin Decker.

ing Iron Works where he was employed from time to time making cannon and bullets. One of the party caught sight of him and he was hotly pursued. The rest stayed behind to plunder and burn the home.

Cuddeback, seeing that he would be overtaken, turned to face the enemy. A tomahawk hurtled through the air, missed its mark. The two men grappled. The Indian had a knife in his belt. He succeeded in getting a hold on it. Cuddeback forced him to release it and it fell among the leaves.

The two men continued to wrestle until both were exhausted. When at last the Indian slipped from Cuddeback's grasp, he made off through the trees. Cuddeback did not have the strength to pursue him. Afterwards he remarked that it had been impossible to get an effective hold on the Indian because of the fact that he was naked and thoroughly greased after the Indian fashion.*

Meantime, the funeral services ended, Major Decker came out of Van Auken's, saw the pall of smoke, realized in a flash what had happened. He put spurs to his horse and rode through the first group of Indians unharmed, for they believed a troop of horses was following him. But now the Major saw a second and larger group trotting toward him down the road. He wheeled his horse and made for the woods. A shot rang out. It caught him in the thigh. His horse stumbled, fell. The Major dismounted, made his way to a cave on the hillside, which may still be seen opposite the Van Etten farm.

Crawling in, he was able to command the narrow entrance with his musket. The Indians prowled around, so close at times that he could see them wink. But if they knew where he was hiding, none of them cared to face the certain death of an attempted capture. He waited until after midnight. Then, when all was silent, he took a chance and succeeded in making his way through the woods and over the mountain to Green's, where he found his son.†

The raiders swept on. For an hour, they hung around Fort Van Auken exchanging shots. Here an Indian was killed. The fort was not taken. The families of Solomon Kuykendall, Simon Westfall, Peter Kuykendall and Martinus Decker had thrilling escapes. Their homes were burned. The little church was burned, too. Also the gristmills of Samuel Davis and Simon Westfall and the sawmills belonging to Martinus Decker and Nehemiah Patterson, the latter in the vicinity of Sparrowbush. In all, twenty-one buildings were destroyed.

* Eager, op. cit., pp. 288-89. Also Gumaer, "Church History."

† Recollections of Solomon J. Westbrook.

The enemy swept on up the Delaware Valley, driving off a herd of horses and cattle, together with some boys and two slaves they had taken captive.

Their pursuit by the militia of Goshen, Warwick and Hamburgh, and the battle of Minisink which occurred opposite the mouth of the Lackawaxen two days later, in which the ranks of the patriots were decimated, brought horror and grief to this county and upper New Jersey. The names of the heroes who perished in this engagement are engraved on a monument in Goshen.

Few men from this neighborhood took part in that fatal battle. Matthew Terwilliger was killed. So were Capt. Bezeleel Tyler and Moses Thomas, 2nd, of the Cohecton Company who had taken refuge here three years earlier. Capt. Abraham Cuddeback who, with Capt. Tyler, was an advance scout for the pursuing party, fought all day until the rout became general, when he managed to escape, largely, says Peter Gunmaer, owing to the fact that he was wearing a uniform which was the color of the leaves.

But the handful of men whose houses and whose forts had been razed at Maghaghkamik could not leave. Detachments of Indians were still lurking in the neighborhood, burning houses and mills as far down as Milford. The menfolks were needed here, to defend the women and children.

One interesting angle of the battle of Minisink which has never been pointed out, illustrates the handicap under which armies operated in those days when rapid communication was impossible. On July 22nd, two days after the raid, Col. Albert Pawling who was stationed at Marbletown waiting for orders to reinforce Gen. James Clinton on the Susquehanna, sent an express to Governor Clinton in which he said: "By accounts this moment received by express from Lieut. Col. Johnson, I hear the enemy have burnt Minisink and surrounded Fort Van Aken. Where this fort is or what men are in it, I know not. . . I wish as we are under marching orders to the Westward to have your directions as to how to conduct myself in this affair."*

To which Governor Clinton replied: "I have this moment received your letter of equal date containing the disagreeable intelligence transmitted you by express from Lieut. Col. Johnson of the destruction of Minisink by the enemy and of their having surrounded Fort Van Aken. I am equally ignorant with yourself where this fort is situated, how con-

* Public Papers of George Clinton, V., p. 150.

structed, or by what troops it is garrisoned . . . I think, however, it would be proper on this occasion to put part of your detachment in motion towards that place . . . ”*

At the moment these letters were being exchanged, the fatal battle of Minisink was being fought. Pawling's troops undoubtedly would have saved the day had he known in time that they were needed. And why did it take two days for news of the Minisink disaster to travel forty miles? Sometimes one wonders how our amateur army managed to defeat the British.

In the same letter from Pawling, it appears that while twenty militiamen were stationed at Peenpack, there were none at Maghaghkamik when this raid occurred. This was still the situation in September. Why? When the matter was called to Governor Clinton's attention, he wrote: "When I directed the stationing of Capt. Wood at Minisink, it was not my intention that he should remain at Peenpack, leaving the settlements to the westward of it exposed to the enemy's incursions. You'll, therefore, immediately order Capt. Wood to detach a part of his company under command of a proper officer, to Minisink to guard that settlement against the depredations of the enemy."†

On August 29th, the Indians and Tories had been defeated by Sullivan and Clinton at Newton (Elmira). Their settlements in the Finger Lake country were wiped out. No more would those fertile and well-cultivated acres serve as a granary for the British army. Nevertheless, the frontier was not secure from further incursions.

In the spring of 1780, a raiding party from Niagara swept down through Pennsylvania. James McCarty, at work on the present McCarty farm below Milford, caught sight of their advance guard and escaping across the river to the fort at Namenock, gave the alarm. The next day occurred the skirmish known as the Battle of Raymondskill, an engagement as disastrous as the Battle of Minisink. The next year there were massacres at Maschippikonk and Warwarsing, which filled this community with foreboding.

But with news of the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown in October of that same year, life began to go its normal way once more. Peenpack and Maghaghkamik turned to the business of repairing the damage which had been done during the war. Other communities were doing the same.

Saw-mills began to buzz in the virgin forests along the Delaware. Powerful, hard-drinking men, who took rafts of ship-timber down to Trenton and Philadelphia for the new navy and the new merchant-ma-

* Public Papers of George Clinton, V., p. 150

† Ibid. p., 291.

rine, came swinging through on their return trip, striding as only a raftsman could stride, and carrying red bandannas filled with oranges from the city.

Even the Neversink and the Bashaskill were pressed into service as rafting streams. Two of our war heroes, Capt. Abraham Westfall* and Capt. Abraham Cuddeback, went into partnership and built a sawmill at Oakland Valley. There the logs were sawed with which the settlements were rebuilt.**

And from there, too, came the timber for the new church. This was in 1786, the third year of Domine Van Bunschooten's ministry. The building was forty feet square with a roof which came to a point in the center. It was affectionately called "the haystack."† It was sided with planed pine boards, inside and out. It was unpainted. On the east side was a low gallery for slaves, which was reached by stairs running up on the outside of the building.‡

The congregation sat through two services, one in the morning and another in the afternoon, on pine benches without cushions. People came on horseback or in lumber wagons. Kitchen chairs were placed in the wagon for seats. Sometimes the hay rigging was used. In the summertime, many came on foot, men and women alike walking bare-foot until they neared the church, in order to save their shoes.

In warm weather, they spent the noon hour in the grove of oak trees which surrounded the church. In winter, they gathered in the hospitable kitchen of Cornelius Cole and replenished with glowing coals from his hearth the little iron foot-stoves which supplied the only heat afforded in the church.

Domine Van Bunschooten was the first to preach sermons here in English as well as Dutch. He compelled the young people to learn and recite the catechism in English. He was stern and outspoken and, as Gumaer says, "well calculated for the rudeness of the time."†*

The introduction of services in English and the erection of the new church were the outstanding accomplishments in Domine Van Bunschooten's twelve years here. He found his congregation absorbed in worldly affairs. Like Romeyn, he had come to the community after a war, when spiritual forces are at their lowest ebb. But there were enough devout souls left to support regular worship. The seeds of spiritual revival were there. They grew and blossomed in the following generation.

* Capt. Abraham Westfall served in the N. Y. Line. Since he was not in the militia, his fighting was done away from the immediate vicinity.

** Gumaer, *History of Deerpark*, p. 169.

† Recollections of John Van Etten.

‡ Dr. Mills in describing the church, did not mention that this gallery was for slaves. Writing in 1878, he was still too close to the Civil War to wish to acknowledge that slavery was once common here.

†* *History of Deerpark*, p. 159.

SUPPLEMENT

Continuing the Account of Individual Pastorates from 1878, the Year in Which Dr. Mills'

Account Ends

Rev. Goyn Talmage

who became the eleventh pastor of the Reformed Church of Deerpark in Port Jervis, N. Y., was educated at New Brunswick, graduating from Rutgers in 1842 and from the Theological Seminary in 1845. He was licensed by the Classis of New Brunswick and settled at Rockaway, where he remained from 1845 until 1851. Succeeding pastorates were Niskayuna (1851-55); Greenpoint (1855-62); Rhinbeck (1867-71); Paramus (1871-79). From 1862 until 1867, he was corresponding secretary of the Board of Domestic Missions. He was president of the General Synod in 1874, and was made Doctor of Divinity by Rutgers in 1876.

Dr. Talmage was a crusader. In his time, Port Jervis was known as "the Chicago of the East," which is analagous to Count Zinzendorf's description of early Kingston as "the Sodom of New York." He denounced the public dance halls and the ten-cent vaudeville shows, which he said were undermining the morals of the young men of the town. He was bitterly attacked for his "startling statements," but continued to deal with the situation in "unvarnished words."

The Christian Endeavor Society was organized during his pastorate, in 1881. The Chapel at Carpenter's Point (Tri-States), was built the year following, and Mr. Galen Bennett began his long service as superintendent of the Chapel Sunday School.

In February, 1886, the church was damaged by a cyclone and the organ given by Mr. H. H. Farnum in 1869 was destroyed. The organ now in use was presented by Mr. Farnum's nephews, Peter E. and Eli P. Farnum, on September 12, 1886.

Dr. Talmage left Port Jervis in 1887. This was his last charge. He died June 24, 1891. A tablet in his memory was unveiled in the church on July 17, 1892.

Rev. Livingston Ludlow Taylor

the twelfth pastor, came here in the fall of 1887. He was prepared at New Brunswick, having graduated from Rutgers in 1881 and from the Seminary in 1884. He was licensed by the Classis of Newark and served as assistant pastor of the Middle Collegiate Church in New York City before coming here.

This was his first independent charge. He was ordained and installed by the Classis of Orange in connection with the observation of the 150th anniversary of the founding of the church. His father, Rev. W. J. R. Taylor, D.D., preached the sermon.

Within a few months after his arrival, the Young Men's Union and the Christomathean Society for the young women of the church were organized. The Junior Christian Endeavor was formed the following year (1889), and in 1890, a Christian Endeavor Society was organized at the Carpenter's Point Chapel. Mr. Taylor held bi-weekly prayer-meetings at the Chapel and preached there Sunday afternoons.

In 1892, a Normal Class for Sunday School Teachers was started under the direction of Mr. S. L. Mapes, who also conducted the Sunday School at the Riverside Mission on Thompson Street, inaugurated by Mr. Taylor. Mid-week services were held at the Mission by the pastor and young men of the church. There was also a sewing and housekeeping class there.

The compilation of the Deerpark Hymnal was also accomplished at this time, with the assistance of Mrs. Taylor, and the chorus choir was revived under the direction of Mr. C. F. Van Inwegen.

When Mr. Taylor resigned in 1892 he had just installed a system of District Visitors by which the name and address of every member of the 247 families connected with the church was recorded in a Parish Register.

Still remembered with enthusiasm as an outstanding feature of church and community life was the Winter Night College, initiated by Mr. Taylor in 1888. An able faculty drawn from the church membership and headed by O. H. Adams, principal of the Academy, taught such subjects as Modern History, German and American Literature, and Science. Each class was called a Circle. Members were required to study half an hour a day. They bought their own text-books. The Circles took turns furnishing literary or musical entertainments which were presented in the social hour with which the evening ended.

The Winter Night College continued for five years. At the end of the last season, in April, 1893, it was reported that the 22 sessions held during the winter just past had had an average attendance of 138 men

and women. The resignation of Mr. Adams in this year may explain why the College was not continued.

Another outstanding feature of Mr. Taylor's pastorate was "Church Life," published the first day of each month by the Young Men's Union under the supervision of the pastor. It made its first appearance in April, 1888, and was continued for fifteen years, until March, 1903, although the Young Men's Union ceased to appear as sponsor after September, 1891.

Among the contributions to "Church Life," was a series of lasting value called "Old Deerpark Days," consisting of biographical sketches of early members of the church, by W. H. Nearpass. The Dutch records of the church, which had been translated by Rev. J. B. TenEyck at the request of the Consistory during the pastorate of Dr. Mills, were also printed in "Church Life."

Mr. Taylor was one of the first members of the Minisink Valley Historical Society, organized in 1888.

Rev. Ame Vennema

the thirteenth pastor, succeeded Mr. Taylor in 1892. He was a graduate of Hope College, Michigan (1879), and the New Brunswick Theological Seminary (1882). He was licensed by the Classis of Holland, Michigan, where he was born. He came here from the Second Church of Rochester, N. Y., having served prior to that at New Paltz (1882-86) and Kalamazoo (1886-89). He was made Doctor of Divinity by Hope College.

Dr. Vennema, like Dr. Talmage, was a crusader. He fought the saloons and once caused the arrest of a police officer who was in a saloon while in uniform. Evangelistic services held in the church in 1895 by Rev. John H. Elliott and Mr. B. Frank Butts brought gratifying results.

During this pastorate, the first dinner ever to be served in the church parlors was prepared by the Christomathean Society. This was December 14, 1894. The occasion was under the management of James H. Lounsbury. It was attended by 160 men. In the speechmaking which followed the banquet, Mr. C. E. Cuddeback, representing the Consistory, remarked that such a scene within the precincts of the church dwelling would hardly have been regarded with approval by the founding fathers.

The affair was hailed by the local press as a successful departure on the part of the "staid old Reformed Church of Port Jervis."

Rev. J. F. Riggs

was the stated supply during the year which followed Dr. Vennema's resignation. Dr. Riggs was a professor in the New Brunswick Theological Seminary. Large audiences were present at all his services. Rev.

Isaac J. Van Hee acted as assistant pastor from June 1st to December 1st, 1896.

Rev. Thomas Hanna MacKenzie.

the fourteenth pastor, came to Port Jervis in 1896. He attended Williams College three years, graduated from Monmouth College, Indiana, in 1888, and from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1891. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Argyle in 1890 and ordained by the Presbytery of New York in the same year. Before coming to Port Jervis, he preached at Pine Bush, N. Y. (1890-96). He has been made Doctor of Divinity.

During his pastorate there was a steady growth in the congregation and church membership. He revived the Riverside Mission under the Y. P. S. C. E., but it did not flourish long. He also revived the District Visitors organized by Mr. Taylor, and the Adult Bible Class. The Deerpark Bible Club, organized in 1897 with a membership of sixty-two, followed for two years the course of study prescribed by the American Institute of Sacred Literature. This proved too technical and was abandoned, but the Bible Club continued.

In 1898, Mr. Almarin Phillips succeeded his father-in-law, Mr. Bennett, as superintendent of the Sunday School at Tri-States Chapel and still continues to serve in that capacity.

Dr. MacKenzie was fond of music, and many cantatas were given in the church by the church members. With the co-operation of the organist, Edgar K. Spring, several series of Organ-Piano and Song and Organ Recitals were given by the church members. The Young People's Society sponsored lecture and musical courses in 1901 and 1902.

The Baptismal Font, a bequest from James H. Lounsbury, was dedicated June 1, 1902. A new organ was installed in the Tri-States Chapel in May of that year. A memorial tablet to Dr. S. W. Mills, who died November 27, 1902, was unveiled in the following year.

Rev. Willard Conger.

the fifteenth pastor, succeeded Mr. MacKenzie in 1905. He graduated from Rutgers in 1896 and from the Seminary in 1899. He was licensed by the Classis of New Brunswick and was an instructor in Rutgers Preparatory School (1899-1901). His first pastorate was at Asbury Park (1901-05), and from there he came to Port Jervis.

The Dutch Arms with a membership made up of the men of the church, was organized November 13, 1906. It is still a thriving organization. During this pastorate electricity replaced gas lights in the church.

Revival of 1915.

On September 13, 1915, a great evangelistic campaign was opened under the joint management of the protestant churches of the vicinity. Mr. Conger was active in this campaign, acted as treasurer, and had the unusual pleasure of announcing a balance when the meetings ended.

A tabernacle was erected for the occasion on the site of the old Canal Basin, with an entrance on Orange Street. The traction company made special arrangements to handle the crowds, which so far exceeded expectations that it was necessary to build an extension to the tabernacle. On September 26th, an audience of 2,500 went out in a storm to attend. In the six weeks which the campaign lasted, the audience totaled over 50,000.

In addition to meetings in the tabernacle, cottage prayer meetings were held. There was a large increase in the membership of all the churches. "Never has Port Jervis and Delaware Valley been so stirred as now along religious and moral lines," said the *Evening Gazette*. The services were conducted by Dr. and Mrs. Milton Rees.

Rev. John Ernest Mertz.

the sixteenth pastor, followed Mr. Conger in 1920. He graduated from Ursinus College in 1914, New Brunswick Seminary in 1917, was licensed by the Classis of Newark in 1917 and preached for three years in the Second Church at Freehold, N. J., before coming to Port Jervis. Since leaving here, he has received the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

Dr. Mertz was a young man who, like Dr. Talmage, was not afraid to say what he thought. He was active in promoting the building of the new High School, and interested in whatever promised to be of advantage to young people. In his farewell sermon, he urged recognition of the child's place in the church and advocated the laying of a foundation for community-wide education, the heart and core of which would be the Sunday School, where children first begin to learn the value of the spiritual.

During this pastorate, the advent of the automobile age was conceded; the horse-sheds back of the church were torn down.

Rev. William Vandever Berg

the seventeenth pastor, came to Port Jervis in December, 1922. He graduated from Lafayette in 1905, from Hartford Seminary in 1908, and was ordained by the Congregational Association, Rutland, Vt., in the same year. He was pastor at Brandon, Vt., 1908-11; associate pastor, Pilgrim Congregational Church, St. Louis, 1912; pastor, Central Congregational Church, Philadelphia, 1913-23. He received the degree of Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1933.

Dr. Berg organized a troop of Boy Scouts which has continued to grow. Mrs. Berg organized a Girl Scout troop which also is still active. During Dr. Berg's pastorate, the Ladies' Aid and the Christomathean Societies were united to form the Women's Guild.

It was Dr. Berg's father, Rev. Herman C. Berg of Ellenville, who gave the address at the laying of the corner stone of the Second Reformed Church in West End, July 18, 1896. The stone was laid by Dr. S. W. Mills.

The Memorial Chimes

presented by Dr. Alfred Clark Carpenter in memory of his parents, Ora Grinnell Carpenter and Phoebe Wickham Carpenter, were dedicated on September 16, 1928, shortly after Dr. Berg's resignation.

Rev. Edward Bartholf Irish

the eighteenth and present pastor, succeeded Dr. Berg in 1929. He graduated from Union College in 1910, New Brunswick Theological Seminary in 1913, and was ordained by the Classis of Montgomery in the same year. Before coming to Port Jervis, he was pastor at Fultonville, N. Y. (1913-16), Church of the Comforter, New York City (1916-18), served as Chaplain in the 117th Engineers, 42nd Division (Rainbow), 1918-19, was associate pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Albany, N. Y. (1919-20), and pastor, Church of the Comforter, New York City (1920-29).

Mr. Irish revived the practice of issuing a church publication; "Eendracht" (meaning "draw together") was issued weekly for three years, 1930-33. Work among the young people has been stressed, Mr. Irish continuing Dr. Berg's practice of serving as Scout Master. He has also been active in promoting the Scout movement throughout the county. A Junior Choir of about thirty members was organized in 1936. A new Chapel was erected at Tri-States in 1933.

Organist's Fiftieth Anniversary

On September 13, 1936, the church and the community observed the fiftieth anniversary of Mr. Edgar K. Spring's service as organist. A recital by Mr. Spring was followed by a reception and tea in the church parlors attended by many former residents and old friends and admirers in the city. In appreciation of his long and faithful service, Mr. Spring was presented with a substantial purse.

HECKMAN
BINDERY INC.



APR 87



N. MANCHESTER,
INDIANA 46962

